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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0280  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1559  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0349  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000145

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [AF](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: GENERAL ABIZAID TALKS IRAN, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN WITH  
ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE

Classified By: Ambassador Michele Sison, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (S) Summary. On the evening of January 21, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) Al Nahyan hosted CENTCOM Commander General John Abizaid for dinner. They discussed regional security issues, but Iraq was clearly the focus of MbZ's interest. MbZ expressed lack of confidence in being able to work with the Maliki government. MbZ believes that the Saudis will not support any Sunni group in Iraq with Al-Qaeda ties, but that the Saudis are firm in their resolve to counter Iran. MbZ reiterated UAE interest in acquiring Predator B. Referring to the recent events in Somalia, MbZ commented: "The Somalia job was fantastic." Also present were UAE Chief of Staff, Lt. General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al-Rumaithy; Director of Intelligence, Staff Brigadier General Engineer Essa Saif Mohammed Al-Mazrouei; Commander of the Special Operations, Major General Juma Ahmed Al-Bawardi Al-Falasi; and Commander of the UAE Air Forces and Air Defense, Staff Air Vice-Marshal (Major General) Mohammed Sowaidan Al-Gimzy. End Summary.

Iraq

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12. (C) Clearly the focus for MbZ, discussion began with his pronouncement: "Let's talk about Iraq." Gen. Abizaid noted that extremists on both ends of the Sunni/Shia spectrum are largely irretrievable, but we still have an opportunity to stabilize Iraq by reinforcing the moderate middle ground. MbZ said that he had little confidence in being able to work with this (Maliki's) government, saying of Maliki: "I think we are operating on different frequencies -- no, different radio systems altogether."

13. (S) MbZ asked General Abizaid what the U.S. hoped to achieve with the extra troops set to deploy to Iraq in 2007, and reiterated his concern about the level of ongoing violence against the Sunni. Abizaid responded that the violence in Iraq is highly localized, principally in the Baghdad area, and that most of the rest of Iraq is quiet. The extra troops are intended to bring calm to Baghdad and give the government sufficient space and time to contain violence even further. It will also send a message that the U.S. is not abandoning Iraq. MbZ stated that Ahmad Chalabi and others had made a "big deal" out of the Baathist threat, but said that the Baathists were not and are not the problem -- even though specific individuals linked to the Ba,ath Party were/are the problem. MbZ offered that de-Baathification was and is "an unnecessary distraction," stating that "pursuing a problem that doesn't really exist only leads to more problems." He said he had seen Iyad Allawi a month ago --

noting that Allawi was looking to the UAE for support and assurances. MbZ said that there is no assurance that the UAE can give him, adding: "It's not his time." MbZ added that he believes that the Saudis will not assist Sunni groups in Iraq that are aligned with Al-Qaeda.

Iran

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¶4. (S) MbZ acknowledged that Tehran knows that the U.S. is serious in its stance against Iranian proliferation. This can be clearly seen in "how Iran is changing its tactics." Abizaid pressed that countries in the region should make stronger statements. Weak statements only encourage the Iranians: "We need our friends to say that they stand with the Americans." MbZ avoided committing the UAE to anything like a public statement and shifted the discussion to other countries in the region saying: "The Saudis need no encouragement -- they are Wahhabis after all -- and will resolutely stand up to any Shi'a anywhere and counter them strongly." Agreeing that it is only a matter of time before the Iranians develop or acquire advanced weapons technologies, including MTCR-controlled UAV technology, MbZ asserted: "That's why we need it first . . . give me Predator B." MbZ added: "Iran has to know that there is a price to pay for every decision they make. They are expanding day by day -- they have to be dealt with before they do something tragic." But that said, he continued: "We (UAE) are not ready yet" to confront Iran.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

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¶5. (S) Abizaid thanked MbZ for the actions of the UAE forces currently deployed in Afghanistan. MbZ reciprocated: "No --

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thank you. This has been a good chance for us, and we appreciate the opportunity." MbZ questioned the role the Iranians were playing in Afghanistan. He further observed that Musharraf is not doing enough to engage the tribes in the south, and needs to expand its efforts there.

Lebanon/Hizballah/Somalia

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¶6. (S) Noting Lebanese PM Siniora's January 16 visit to the UAE, MbZ characterized Siniora as a good man. We are supporting him." MbZ said that Hizballah has made a "big mistake" in estimating its support in Lebanon, and has "played it wrong -- they do not have the support of the majority of the Lebanese people." MbZ discussed with Abizaid the military technology that Hizballah used in 2006, specifically noting the amount of anti-tank weapons that Hizballah possessed. Abizaid acknowledged that Hizballah has access to weapons technology that most Arab states don't have. MbZ interrupted the conversation to state explicitly that he wants the U.S. to understand that the UAE was not involved in the transfer of those weapons or technologies in any way. Referring to the recent events in Somalia, MbZ commented: "The Somalia job was fantastic."

¶7. (U) POLAD Ambassador Richard Roth has approved this message.

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